

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION RE OLYMPICS

REF: OTTAWA 3149

1. MONTREALERS IN GENERAL ARE OF OPINION THAT OLYMPICS WERE A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS. THERE WAS THROUGHOUT THE GAMES A FEELING OF ELATION AND PRIDE REMINISCENT OF EXPO 67. EVEN STRONGEST CRITICS WERE IMPRESSED BY PHYSICAL PLANT, ORGANIZATION, CEREMONIES, ETC. POLITICAL ISSUES OVER TAIWAN, NEW ZEALAND AND WITHDRAWAL OF AFRICAN NATIONS SEEMED TO GAIN GREATEST IMPORTANCE FROM FACT THAT THEY JEOPARDIZED THE GAMES.

2. HOWEVER, BY DAY AFTER CLOSING CEREMONIES, EDITORIALS BEGAN EMPHASIZING COSTS BURDEN AND CONCERN WHETHER NEW FACILITIES WILL BE MAXIMALLY UTILIZED. SOME OPTIMISM WAS EXPRESSED THAT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT THAT ALL CANADA BENEFITTED FROM THE OLYMPICS AND WILL PAY PART OF THE COSTS. "IT'S BEAUTIFUL BUT TOO MUCH" HAS BEEN GENERAL TENOR AMID SPECULATION THAT NO FACILITY WILL PAY FOR ITSELF. LATTER POINT REINFORCED BY STATEMENT OF VICTOR GOLDBLOOM, MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR OLYMPICS INSTALLATIONS, THAT SALE OR RENTAL OF VILLAGE AS PRIVATE HOUSING MAY RESULT IN \$50 MILLION DEFICIT, STORIES THAT PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PAY ESTIMATED \$50 THOUSAND DAILY RENTAL FOR STADIUM AND STILL MAKE PROFIT, ETC.

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EM PRESS LET-DOWN EVIDENTLY AHEAD OF PUBLIC HOWEVER, AS, ON OTHER HAND, PUBLIC COMMENTS TO CONGEN AT SUCCESSION OF POST-GAMES SOCIAL FUNCTIONS HAVE CONTINUED EUPHORIC. THERE IS EXPRESSED SENSE THAT GAMES PROVIDED, IN ADDITION TO SUPERB FACILITIES, THINGS THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY, SUCH AS NEW APPRECIATION OF MONTREAL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND A NEW AWARENESS IN CANADA OF THE BENEFITS OF AMATEUR SPORTS, AS WELL AS A GREATER FRIENDLINESS, THEY FEEL, TOWARD QUEBEC IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

4. REACTION TO THE UNITED STATES AND AMERICAN ATHLETES ALSO WAS MIXED. THE ORIGIANL DIFFICULTIES OVER TAIWAN, AND PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE US MIGHT PULL OUT OF THE GAMES ALTOGETHER, PROVIDED AN EXCUSE TO THE SEGMENT OF THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC THAT SEIZES EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BELABOR AND BELITTLE THE US. CRITICISM RANGED FROM OUTRAGE AT THE ANTICS OF A FEW ATHLETES TO COMPLAINTS THAT THE AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA AVAILABLE HERE (ABC AND TIME) OVERPLAYED AMERICAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HOWEVER, SPECTATORS AT THE GAMES THEMSELVES, LARGELY CANADIAN AND AMERICAN, GENERALLY WERE ENTHUSIASTIC OVER THE ATHLETES OF BOTH COUNTRIES AND THE APPRECIATIVE ATMOSPHERE WAS MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FROM MEDIA SNIPING. SIMILARLY, A NUMBER OF CANDIANS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE THOROUGH TV COVERAGE BY ABC, NOT ONLY OF THE SPORTS EVENTS BUT OF THE CITY OF MONTREAL.
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